

NYRx Highlight: Respiratory Syncytial Virus

What is Respiratory Syncytial Virus?

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a virus that infects the nose, throat, and lungs. RSV spreads in the fall and winter and transmission occurs primarily via respiratory droplets when a person coughs or sneezes, or through direct contact with a contaminated surface. Infants, young children, and older adults, especially those with chronic medical conditions, are at increased risk of severe disease from RSV infection.

Based on data from previous years, the New York State (NYS) Department of Health (DOH) recognizes the RSV season as October 16th through March 31st of each season.

What Providers Need to Know for Infants and Young Children

For infants and young children, RSV preventative options include Beyfortus™ and Synagis®.

Beyfortus

- Beyfortus (nirsevimab) is an RSV F protein-directed fusion inhibitor indicated for the prevention of RSV lower respiratory tract disease (LRTD) in:
 - Neonates and infants born during or entering their first RSV season.
 - Children up to 24 months of age who remain vulnerable to severe RSV disease through their second RSV season.
- Beyfortus is administered as a single intramuscular injection.
- Beyfortus is available free of charge to providers enrolled in the [Vaccines for Children \(VFC\) Program](#). NYRx should not be billed for the cost of the product.

Synagis

- Synagis (palivizumab) is an RSV F protein inhibitor indicated for the prevention of serious LRTD caused by RSV in pediatric patients with:
 - A history of premature birth (less than or equal to 35 weeks gestational age) and who are six months of age or younger at the beginning of RSV season.
 - Bronchopulmonary dysplasia (BPD) that required medical treatment within the previous six months and who are 24 months of age or younger at the beginning of RSV season.

- Hemodynamically significant congenital heart disease (CHD) and who are 24 months of age or younger at the beginning of RSV season.
- Synagis is administered as a monthly intramuscular injection beginning prior to the commencement of and throughout the RSV season.
- Synagis is covered by NYRx and requires prior authorization (PA). The prescriber or their authorized agent (an employee of the prescribing practitioner who has access to the patient's medical records) can initiate the PA process for Synagis via phone by calling the NYRx Call Center at 1-877-309-9493 or by faxing the [CDRP Palivizumab \(Synagis®\) Prescriber Worksheet](#) to 1-800-268-2990.

Note: When submitting a PA for Synagis, be sure to use the [CDRP Palivizumab \(Synagis®\) Prescriber Worksheet](#) to ensure that the PA request includes all necessary information for review.

Considerations Regarding the Use of Beyfortus and Synagis

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) [advise](#):

- If Beyfortus is administered, Synagis should not be administered later that season.
- If Synagis was administered initially for the season and less than five doses were administered, the infant should receive one dose of Beyfortus. No further Synagis should be administered.
- If Synagis was administered in season one and the child is eligible for RSV prophylaxis in season two, the child should receive Beyfortus in season two, if available. If Beyfortus is not available, Synagis should be administered as previously recommended.

What Providers Need to Know for Adults

The NYS DOH in partnership with the New York State Education Department (NYSED) has determined that pharmacists can administer the RSV vaccine to patients ages 60 and older pursuant to patient-specific and non-patient-specific orders and consistent with the ACIP recommendations. Arexvy® and Abrysvo™ are covered by NYRx in line with ACIP recommendations and may be administered by a pharmacist at a Medicaid-enrolled pharmacy.

Arexvy

Arexvy is a vaccine indicated for active immunization for the prevention of LRTD caused by RSV in

- Individuals 60 years of age and older.
- Individuals 50 through 59 years of age who are at increased risk for LRTD caused by RSV.

Abrysvo

Abrysvo is a vaccine indicated for:

- Active immunization for the prevention of LRTD caused by RSV in individuals 60 years of age and older.
- Active immunization of pregnant individuals at 32 through 36 weeks gestational age for the prevention of LRTD and severe LRTD caused by RSV in infants from birth through six months of age.

Note: Effective August 13, 2024 pharmacists are authorized per the NYS [Commissioner of Health's non-patient specific standing order](#) to administer ABRYSVO to pregnant women of any age who meet the following criteria:

- The pregnant person is between 32 and 36 weeks and six days gestation.
- It is during the RSV season.
- The pregnant person has been counseled that if they receive Abrysvo and the infant is born greater than or equal to two weeks from administration, that the infant in most situations will not need to receive nirsevimab for RSV protection.

Coverage of RSV Vaccines Administered by a Pharmacist

As [recommended](#) by the ACIP of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), New York State Medicaid covers vaccination administered by a pharmacist against RSV illness. NYRx may be billed for RSV vaccine administered by a qualified pharmacy provider. Managed Care Plans must make vaccine coverage available when billed as a medical or institutional claim. For additional information about billing, see the NYRx [Pharmacists as Immunizers Fact Sheet](#).

Consistent with Medicaid immunization policy, pharmacies will bill the administration fee and, when applicable, the acquisition cost of the vaccine using the appropriate procedure codes.

Please refer to [NYRx Billing Guidance: Non-Patient-Specific Orders](#) for further guidance on origin code and serial number values that must be submitted on the claim for "pharmacy dispensing" when applicable for non-patient-specific orders.

Resources

- [CDRP Palivizumab \(Synagis®\) Prescriber Worksheet](#)
- [NYRx Education & Outreach Website](#)
- [Pharmacists as Immunizers Fact Sheet](#)
- [RSV Provider Notification](#)
- [Vaccines for Children Program](#)

Contact Information

The NYRx Education & Outreach Call Center is available by phone at 1-833-967-7310 or by email at NYRxEO@primetherapeutics.com from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM ET, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

The NYRx Education & Outreach team hosts virtual office hours every week for stakeholders to ask questions related to NYRx and care coordination. Visit the [NYRx Education & Outreach website](#) for more information.